



Litter Picks

Electronic Newsletter

May-June 2008

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Enhancement
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DEQ's Community Involvement Initiative: The Department of Environmental Quality is dedicated to helping the public better understand DEQ's role in protecting the environment, and to involving the public more effectively in environmental decision making.

Welcome to Litter Picks, a look at litter prevention news in the Commonwealth and across the nation. We hope that some of this information is helpful to you in your programs, and hope you'll help us with news from your area related to litter prevention and awareness. Had a successful clean up event? Recognized companies or citizens for their clean up efforts? Let us know by sending this information to Sheila Barnett at smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov.

Illegal Tire Dumpers were Caught!

Frank Gough, a Virginia conservation police officer, has been working on an illegal tire dumping case in **Giles County** for two years. Finally, he got his lucky break when an informant reported seeing a truck loaded with tires headed to the river. Mr. Gough caught the two men who were served with a total of seven warrants (four for illegal dumping). The case was scheduled to be heard in Giles County General District Court on June 27.

The Giles County Board of Supervisors recognized Mr. Gough for his contribution to the county and the "ReNew the New River" advocacy group recognized him for being a good steward of the river.

For more information, contact George Caldwell, Litter and Recycling program manager for Giles County, at gcald.gcpsa@pemt.net or (540) 626-7046.

Results from the 20th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup

There were 12,078 volunteers that participated in the Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. Collectively, 285 tons of trash was collected along with 17 tons of tires. The **City of Alexandria** and the following Virginia counties registered cleanup sites with the Potomac River Watershed Cleanup Project: **Arlington, Augusta, Clarke, Fairfax, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford** and **Westmoreland**.

Virginia had 132 registered cleanup sites. Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland also had registered sites for this cleanup.

For more information about the Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, go to:
http://www.hardbargainfarm.org/trash_initiative/rc_sites.html

Web Link of Interest:

The **Gloucester Clean Community Program** started a newsletter about litter and recycling to keep the citizens informed about what is going on in Gloucester to promote recycling and curb littering. Check it out:
<http://www.gloucesterva.info/clean/home.htm>

Did you Know?

- ✓ The performance and accounting report (pages 7 – 10) for the non-competitive Litter Prevention and Recycling Grant **MUST be postmarked by August 31, 2008** for the application to be complete. Go to: <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/recycle/programs.html> or contact Sheila Barnett at smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov or (804) 698-4055.
- ✓ The **Virginia Council for Litter Prevention and Recycling** will be hosting a litter conference October 22 – 24, 2008 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Fredericksburg. If you are interested in presenting at the conference, please contact Clara Mills at cmills@spotsylvania.va.us or Rosemary Byrne at cleanfairfax1@aol.com
- ✓ **King William County** reported that more than 500 volunteers turned out this past spring and picked up 822 bags of litter along the roadways which equates to 41 tons of litter in a single month! Contact Mary Walton for additional information at mwalton@kingwilliamcounty.us or (804) 769-4917
- ✓ The **City of Norfolk** has implemented a TAG-OUT Graffiti Abatement Pilot Program. Citizens of Norfolk are asked to call a special Norfolk CARES hotline to report incidents of Graffiti in the City. Graffiti Abatement is important because where there is graffiti, there is likely to be more litter. For more information, contact Holly Carson at holly.carson@norfolk.gov or (757) 441-1347
- ✓ The **Clean Valley Council (CVC)** reported that they had 77 teams consisting of 1,557 volunteers to help with a litter pick up in the greater Roanoke Valley. Legislator William Fralin and his family showed their support for promoting a clean community by joining the CVC Board members' team for the pick up. For more information contact Ann Masters at ann@cleanvalley.org or (540) 345-5523.
- ✓ Hundreds of volunteers helped to pick up litter in **Charlottesville's** Southwood neighborhood in May through a partnership between Comcast and Habitat for Humanity. More than 50,000 Comcast volunteers helped to clean up the neighborhood. For more information contact Bruce Edmonds at bedmonds@rivanna.org or (434)977-2976, Ext. 128

Litter Picks Continued

Fairfax County Implements Report-a-Litterer Program

The **Clean Fairfax Council** and the Fairfax County Police Department are co-sponsoring a report a litterer program. When someone reports seeing litter being thrown from a vehicle, the citizen sends the requested vehicle information to the Clean Fairfax Council. The Clean Fairfax Council will turn the information over to the police department that will in turn, send a letter to the owner of the vehicle.

To see the brochure about the program, visit the Clean Fairfax Council Website and click on the link to "Report a Litterer." <http://www.cleanfairfaxcouncil.org/> or contact Rosemary Byrne at cleanfairfax1@aol.com or (703) 324-5471.

News on Plastic Bags

The Virginia Plastic Bag Advisory Group was created to develop recommended solutions to the problems created by plastic bags that blow into farm fields and become a problem later during the manufacturing of cotton fabric. During the 2008 General Assembly, State Senator Frederick M. Quayle (Senate District 13) introduced a bill that would have allowed localities to require retailers to only provide reusable plastic bags to their customers. This bill, Senate Bill No. 711 (2008), is expected to be re-considered by the 2009 General Assembly.

The Trex Company, Inc. headquartered in **Winchester** depends on plastic bags being collected so that they can be used as a primary feedstock for making a plastic and sawdust based lumber. The Progressive Bag Affiliates (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Progressive_Bag_Affiliates) supports the continued use of plastic bags and believes that people can change their behavior so that plastic bags do not become litter, but are recycled instead.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is reviewing Senator Quayle's 2008 bill pertaining to the issue of plastic bags. The proposed bill was continued in the 2008 session in part because the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) volunteered to conduct a plastic bag study and DEQ was asked to assist in this study. Two joint resolutions were also introduced addressing plastic bags in 2008, HJR 169 and SJR 82.

Mike Murphy, Director of Environmental Enhancement, has suggested to the Advisory Group that a litter control initiative used in Southwest Virginia which uses using parolees to pick up litter might serve as part of the solution to the problems plastic bag litter is causing for cotton farmers. Other ideas the Advisory Group is evaluating include promoting incentive programs to recycle plastic bags or assigning an additional cost for consumers who wish to continue to use plastic bags. Education outreach to citizens of all ages will need to be a key component in solving the problems of plastic bags in Virginia.

For more information about the Virginia Plastic Bag Advisory Group contact Ms. Rachel Morris -Chieppa, Rural Economic Development Manager for **the Isle of Wight County** at rchieppa@isleofwightus.net.

To access the bill and resolutions for SB 711, SJR 82, and HJR 169 go to: <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?081+men+BIL>

Responses to Inquiry: Do "No Littering" Signs Reduce Litter?

In the April edition of "Litter Picks" I asked for your opinions about the effectiveness of the "Do Not Litter" signs along the roads with a posted fine and the effectiveness of such signage in your jurisdictions. We received only two responses, but both of the respondents believe that using positive wording in signage appeals to citizens finer nature. Our coordinator reported that there is often more litter directly under the "Do Not Litter" road signs in her jurisdiction.

The Victorian Litter Action Alliance of Australia researched roadside signage and made recommendations on how anti-littering signs can be made more effective. The link to the summary is provided below.

<http://www.litter.vic.gov.au/www/html/1296-roadside-signage.asp>

For additional comments, contact Sheila Barnett at smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov or (804) 698-4055.

Police Cutouts are on Litter Patrol in Mobile, Alabama

Littering is illegal. When people see police officers, they think of law enforcement. Keep Mobile Beautiful and the City of Mobile, Alabama have decided to combine the image of seeing a police officer with a litter prevention message. The city has six life-size cardboard cutouts of police officers holding anti-litter messages which are placed in strategic locations throughout the city.

For more information, contact Bob Haskins of Keep Mobile Beautiful at haskins@cityofmobile.org or (251) 208-6026.

Extreme Clean Makeover – Amelia Edition 2008

The **Amelia County** Waste Management Division and McDonalds sponsored a community-wide spring clean up and beautification effort that they titled "Extreme Clean Makeover – Amelia Edition 2008" The Extreme Clean Makeover program ran from April 1 – May 10. Middle and high school students designed posters to advertise the program.

Nearly 100 citizens spent approximately 300 hours cleaning up Amelia County. Approximately 40 tons of trash and 36 tons of tires were collected during this campaign.

A collection event for waste tires was held as part of the Extreme Clean Makeover program to provide for proper collection of unsightly tires, disposal and recycling.

For more information, contact Patty Averett at patty.averett@ameliacova.com or (804) 561-3039

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